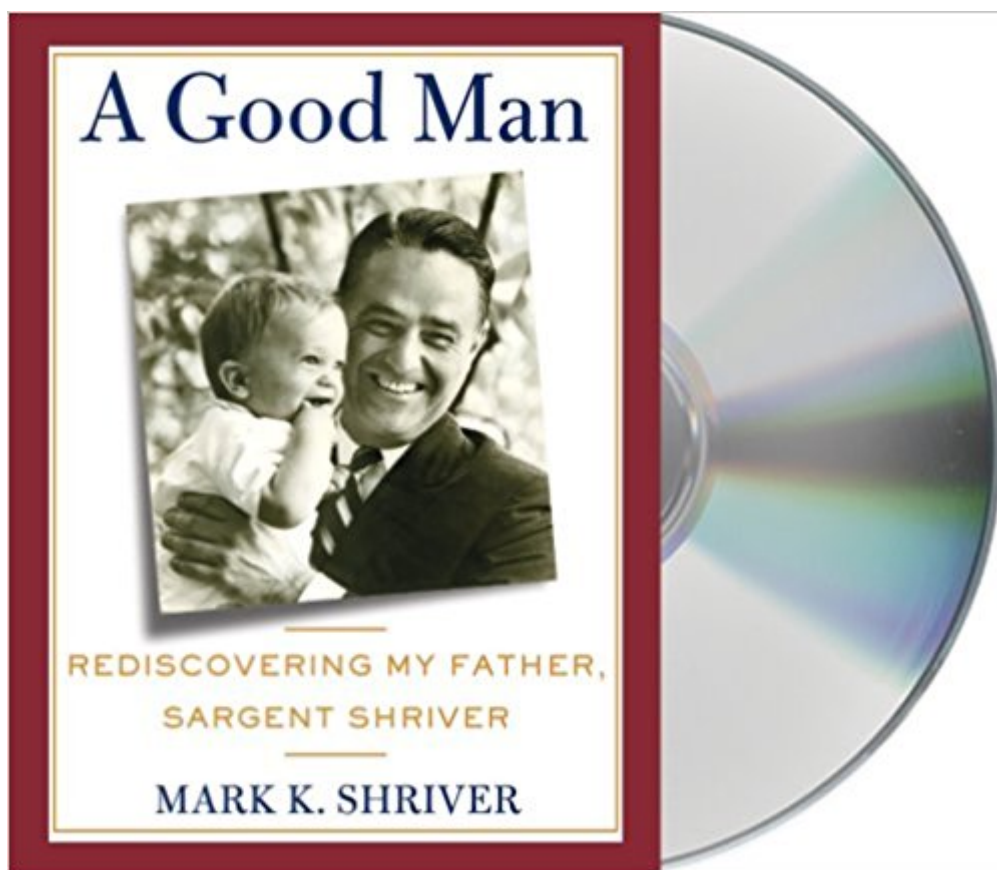




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# A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver



## Synopsis

In this intimate portrait of an extraordinary father-son relationship, Mark K. Shriver discovers the moral principles that guided his legendary father and applies them to his own life. When Sargent "Sarge" Shriver—founder of the Peace Corps and architect of President Johnson's War on Poverty—died in 2011 after a valiant fight with Alzheimer's, thousands of tributes poured in from friends and strangers worldwide. These tributes, which extolled the daily kindness and humanity of "a good man," moved his son Mark far more than those who lauded Sarge for his big-stage, headline-making accomplishments. After a lifetime searching for the path to his father's success in the public arena, Mark instead turns to a search for the secret of his father's joy, his devotion to others, and his sense of purpose. Mark discovers notes and letters from Sarge; hears personal stories from friends and family that zero in on the three guiding principles of Sarge's life—faith, hope, and love—and recounts moments with Sarge that now take on new value and poignancy. In the process, Mark discovers much about himself, as a father, as a husband, and as a social justice advocate. *A Good Man* is an inspirational and deeply personal story about a son discovering the true meaning of his father's legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Since most people are happiest doing what they are good at, it's no wonder that Sargent Shriver was always smiling. He was good in every role he filled--husband, father, friend, public servant, and visionary. And he was as inspiring as they come. Mark's poignant tribute captures the idealism and exuberance that made us all love Sarge, and reminds us to find pleasure in the simple

act of living. “Former President Bill Clinton “This tender, endearing memoir is a moving portrait of a son’s struggle to deal with the gradual disappearance of a beloved father through the progressive stages of Alzheimer’s. It is a praiseworthy book. Doris Kearns Goodwin “This is a deeply touching story of a famous family and the private joys and trials that came with it. Mark’s love letter to his Dad is one we can all learn from.

Tom Brokaw “As founder of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver had the genius to change lives, mine included. With this powerful book, his son Mark shows a great man can also be a good man. What a joy to read about Sarge, the father. In a real way, he was father to everyone who ever served in the Peace Corps.

Chris Matthews “What a lovely book this is. It’s funny and sad and inspiring without being insipid. Why was it, this loving son wanted to know, that everyone described his highly accomplished father, Sarge Shriver, as a ‘good man’? In the middle of the active and ambitious Kennedy and Shriver families, Mark Shriver comes to understand his father’s faith in God’s love anchored him and allowed him to do all that he did so well, including dealing with his own Alzheimer’s. In getting to know his father better even after his death, Shriver learns some lessons useful to all of us.

Cokie Roberts, author of *We Are Our Mothers’ Daughters* “In *A Good Man*, Mark Shriver gives a rich personal account of growing up with a father whose boundless optimism and life of public service made a profound difference for millions of people. Read it and come away, like Mark, reenergized and re-inspired to follow Sargent Shriver’s extraordinary example.

Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children’s Defense Fund “Asking around, in order to write about Sarge Shriver, I could find no one with a bad word to say about him. This book tells why. The mystery of goodness is deeper than the mystery of evil.

Garry Wills

Mark K. Shriver is the senior vice president of U.S. Programs at Save the Children in Washington, D.C., and a former Maryland state legislator. Shriver also started the Choice Program and served on the coalition to create the National Commission on Children and Disasters following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. He lives with his wife and three children in Maryland.

I wasn’t aware that Mark Shriver was a writer but this book about his father was a wonderful remembrance of a great leader and great person in American life in the 20th century. It was inspiring and I suspect it was the reason he was encouraged to write a bio of Pope Francis as well.

Sargent and Eunice Shriver have long been personal heroes of mine. They represented, in fact, ‘the

Best and the Brightest' of both the New Frontier and the Great Society - not the individuals usually credited with that label. As the years have gone by, so many important figures from that era have seen their reputations tarnished. For that reason, it was with some trepidation I opened this book for fear it might let a little too much daylight in, onto these two social activists. Scott Stossel's excellent biography of Sargent Shriver covers Shriver's extraordinary professional life. Mark Shriver's tender and moving book deals with Shriver the man: father, husband, friend, baseball fan. It also addresses Shriver's devout Catholic faith and how it influenced every aspect of his life. Interestingly, Mark Shriver points out - and notes that his father never complained about - how his connection to the Kennedy family had negative repercussions on Shriver's own political career. Sargent Shriver - and Eunice Shriver - were amazingly successful at creating peaceful revolutions. Either - or both - would have made great Presidents. Pity (for the country) the weight and influence of the Kennedy family was never thrown behind them.

A friend, who always reads great books, recommended this book. I thoroughly enjoyed it and have passed it along to another friend. What a great tribute to his father Mark Shriver has written. I admit I didn't know very much about Sargent Shriver when I started reading this book. I remember first hearing about Sargent Shriver when the Peace Corp was established in the 60's when I was very young, but I didn't know what a great man and father he was. As I read this book I kept thinking how fortunate his kids were to have him for a dad and how so many kids could benefit if they could have a dad like him. This book would make a great gift for any dad or soon to be dad.

Mark Shriver's "A Good Man" is one son's view of the life of a truly great man - an interweave of many diverse literary strands: biography, history, insights on faith, life, learning, Mark's own relationships as brother, husband, father and public citizen all in the context of his relationship with his father, Sargent Shriver. The narrative is at once very personal as it is universal and broadly applicable, particularly to any father struggling to do his best with his children. As one reviewer on this site already commented, it is a book about "Growing Up Kennedy" by someone who actually did. The deeper import, however, is Mark Shriver's insight and perspective into the experience and choices his father made for himself, his family and those he worked with and served. Reading the book, there are sections where the author brings you close into the relationship with his father and the actions that he took on a personal and professional level. For any father who has to balance the various competing demands in his life, which is all fathers, this book provides insights into a truly successful father's journey through life. Very timely for Father's Day!

This is only the second book I have reviewed on . I got this book for Father's Day (how appropriate)and yes, I did request it but was skeptical that it would add anything to my knowledge and reverence for Sarge. Having read many books on the Kennedys and Stossel's excellent biography, I thought what else could be said. Well I WAS WRONG. This is about the most beautiful, moving story about a father and his children written in a long time. Sarge apart from being an astounding public servant whose legacy will live on forever, was the type of father we should all strive to be or hope to have. Never failing to support his children, never failing to express his love and never failing to be a shining beacon of truth, compassion and conviction. Mark's description of his father's faith, love for his wife and children makes us all crave for that kind of life. Mark's struggles with the Kennedy legacy and the battle of the cousins were honest, heartfelt and inciteful. However the strenth of the book lies in Mark's description of Sarge's decline with Alzheimers. I think I shed many tears through the last third of the book thinking about the loss he was feeling and the burdens he was bearing. Nothing is more moving than his admiration for his father's ability to power through his disease with the love and faith that he always had. Sarge's speech at Yale where he said "break the glass" was a lesson for everyone of all ages. As Pres. Clinton said at his funeral, "he (sarge) was really that good" and maybe even better. When Mark's ask his father in a lucid moment about what it felt like to have Alzheimer's and he responds "I am doing the best I can with what god has given me" is an adage that we should all live by. The book should have been entitled "Two Good Men" because Mark clearly showed how he was not just a good and loving son, but a Good Man just like his father probably hoped he would be. I cannot recommend this book enough and it is a must read for fathers and their children. Enjoy!

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